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REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claims 5 and 15 would be allowed if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, and that claims 6, 7, and 16 would also be allowed if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the early indication of allowable subject matter. By this amendment, Applicant has amended claims 5 and 15 by rewriting them in independent form and by amending claims 6 and 16 to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112. Therefore, claims 5-7, 15, and 16 are in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 6, 7, and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph; rejected claims 1-4 and 12-14 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,352,141 issued to Kent; rejected claims 8-11, 18, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Kent in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,087,825 issued to Ingraham; and rejected claims 8-11, 18, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Kent in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,235,217 issued to Kirton.

By this amendment, Applicant has amended claims 1, 5, 6, 12-18, and 20 to more clearly define the present invention, and has added new claims 21-32 to define additional features of the present invention. Accordingly, claims 1-32 are now pending.

With respect to the rejection of claims 6, 7, and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, Applicant has amended claims 6 and 16 to more clearly recite the present

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invention. Applicant submits that amended claims 6, 7, and 16 meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 1-4 and 12-14 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Kent. As pointed out on page 51 of the present specification, the present invention provides a mechanism by which the touch control circuit can discriminate between an intentional touching of the touch terminal and an inadvertent contact by the operator. Specifically, when the touch terminal is palm-sized and includes a dielectric cover, users may intentionally touch the touch terminal by placing their palm over the entire surface of the touch terminal. When the operator touches the touch terminal in this manner, the touch control circuit of the present invention generates a control signal. On the other hand, if the operator inadvertently touches the touch terminal with one or two fingers, the touch control circuit of the present invention senses a lower body capacitance in the proximity of the touch terminal and thereby determines that the touch was unintentional and thus does not generate the control signal.

As amended, independent claim 1 recites a capacitive response electronic switching circuit comprising a combination of elements including at least "an input touch terminal having a dielectric cover defining an area for an operator to provide an input by touch, an operator's body capacitance as sensed through said input touch terminal varying as a function of the area of said input touch terminal that is proximate the operator's body," and a detector circuit that "includes means for generating said control signal when the sensed body

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capacitance exceeds a threshold level in order to prevent unintended activation based upon an operator's inadvertent contact with said input touch terminal."

The Kent patent discloses a touch switch device that also generates the control signal in response to the touching of a touch terminal. The Kent patent, however, fails to teach or suggest a capacitive responsive electronic switching circuit having a detector circuit that includes means for generating a control signal when the sensed body capacitance exceeds a threshold level in order to prevent unintended activation based upon an operator's inadvertent contact with the input touch terminal. Thus, the Kent patent does not anticipate nor render obvious the invention as defined in independent claim 1. Clearly, the Kent patent does not disclose any way of discriminating between a partial touch and a full touch of the touch terminal.

With respect to independent claim 12, the Kent patent fails to teach or suggest a touch-controlled switching circuit comprising a charge pump circuit that supplies an output signal having a voltage that varies as a function of the area of the touch terminal that is touched by an operator. Therefore, the Kent patent fails to teach or suggest each and every element recited in independent claim 12.

For these reasons, independent claims 1 and 12, as well as claims 2-4, 13, and 14 which depend therefrom, are allowable over the Kent patent.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 8-11, 18, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Kent in view of Ingraham. Like the Kent patent, the Ingraham patent, which is assigned to the assignee of the present invention, fails to teach

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or suggest a touch control circuit that discriminates between a full intentional contact with a touch terminal and an inadvertent partial contact of the same touch terminal. Therefore, the combination of the Kent and Ingraham patents fails to teach or suggest each and every element recited in independent claim 1. For this reason claims 8-11, which depend from independent claim 1, are allowable over the combination of the Kent and Ingraham patents.

With respect to independent claim 18, the Kent and Ingraham patents both fail to teach or suggest a capacitive responsive electronic switching circuit comprising a detector circuit that compares the sensed body capacitance proximate an input touch terminal to a threshold level in order to prevent inadvertent generation of a control output signal. For these reasons, Applicant submits that independent claims 1 and 18, as well as claims 8-11 and 19 which depend therefrom, are allowable over the Kent and Ingraham patents whether considered separately or in combination.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 8-11, 18, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Kent in view of Kirton. The Kirton patent, like the Kent and Ingraham patents, does not disclose a touch control circuit that is capable of discriminating between a full intentional touch of a touch terminal and an inadvertent touch of a portion of the surface of the touch terminal. For these reasons, independent claims 1 and 18, as well as claims 8-11 and 19 which depend therefrom, are allowable over the teachings of the Kent and Kirton patents whether considered separately or in combination.

It is noted that the Examiner has not rejected claims 17 and 20 in the Office Action. Claim 17 depends from independent claim 12 and is believed to be allowable for the reasons

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discussed above with respect to claim 12. Independent claim 20 recites a dome-shaped touch terminal. By this amendment, Applicant has amended independent claim 20 to recite that the detector circuit includes means for discriminating between a touch of the dome-shaped touch terminal by the palm of a human hand and a touch by a human finger. For the reasons stated above with respect to independent claims 1, 12, and 18, Applicant submits that independent claim 20 is allowable over the combined teachings of the Kent, Ingraham, and Kirton patents.

In this amendment, Applicant has presented new independent claim 21, and claims 22-26 which depend therefrom. New independent claim 21 defines a capacitive responsive electronic switching circuit comprising at least a detector circuit "including discriminating means for discriminating between the touch of said touch terminal covering substantially all of said area of said touch terminal and a touch covering less than substantially all of said area of said touch terminal. For the reasons discussed above with respect to the other independent claims, Applicants submit that neither the Kent, Ingraham, nor Kirton patents teach or suggest the touch control circuit including a detector circuit having such discriminating means. Therefore, new independent claim 21 as well as claims 22-26 are allowable over the references cited of record.

New independent claim 27 recites a switching circuit for a control device that comprises at least first and second touch terminals and a detector circuit that generates a control output signal for actuation of the control device when an operator is proximal or touches the second touch terminal after the operator is proximal or touches the first touch

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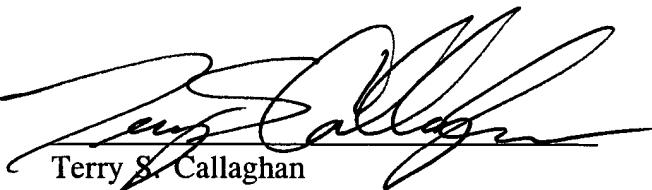
terminal. Dependent claim 28 recites that the detector circuit generates the control signal only when the second touch terminal is actuated within a predetermined time period after the actuation of the first touch terminal. Applicant submits that none of the cited references teaches or suggests such features. New claims 29-32 depend from new independent claim 27 and are believed to be allowable for the same reasons stated above with respect to independent claim 27.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that the present invention as defined in the pending claims, is allowable over the prior art of record. The Examiner's reconsideration and timely allowance of the claims are requested. A Notice of Allowance is therefore respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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